

# Indiana's Promise: A Report on the 21st Century Scholars Program

November 2021 Commission Meeting

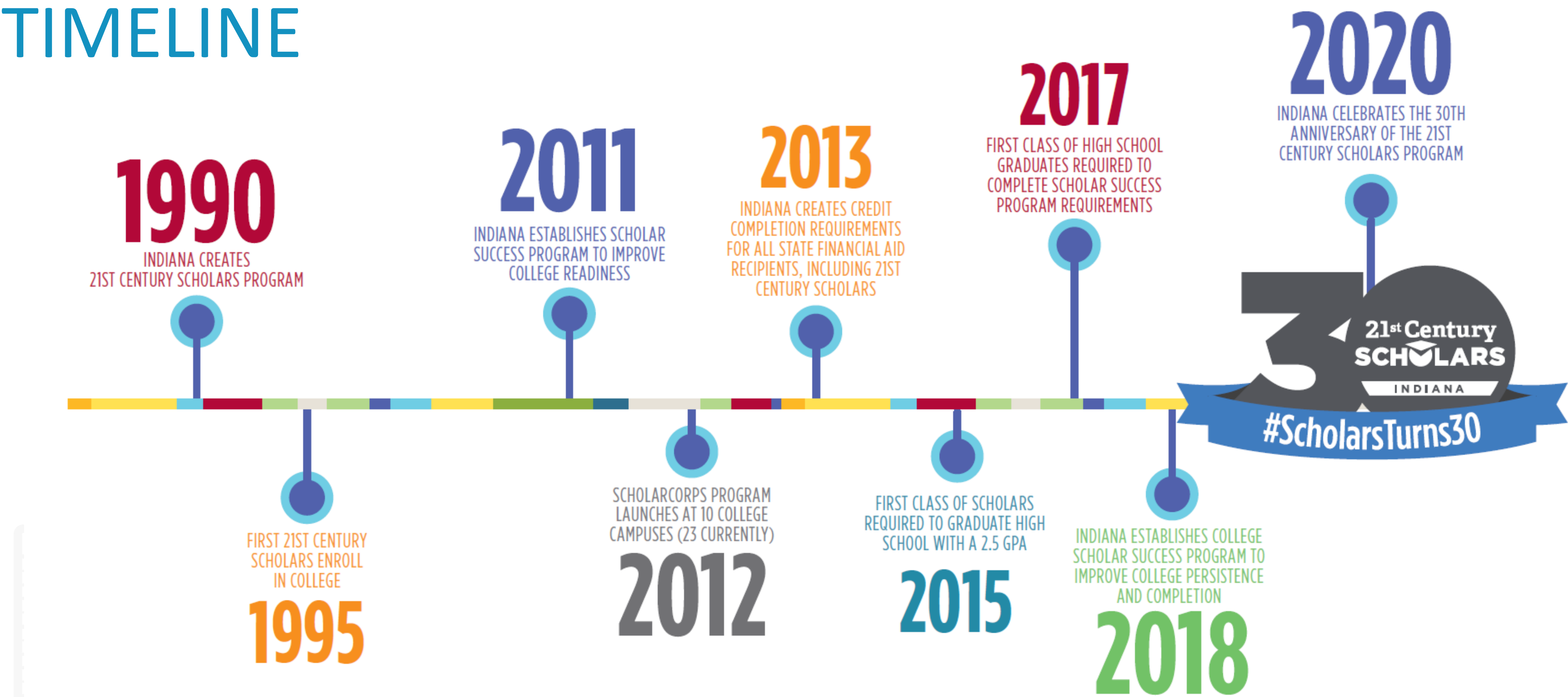
Barbie Martin, Assistant Commissioner for Outreach  
Sean Tierney, Associate Commissioner for Policy and Research

November 18, 2021

# PROGRAM HISTORY

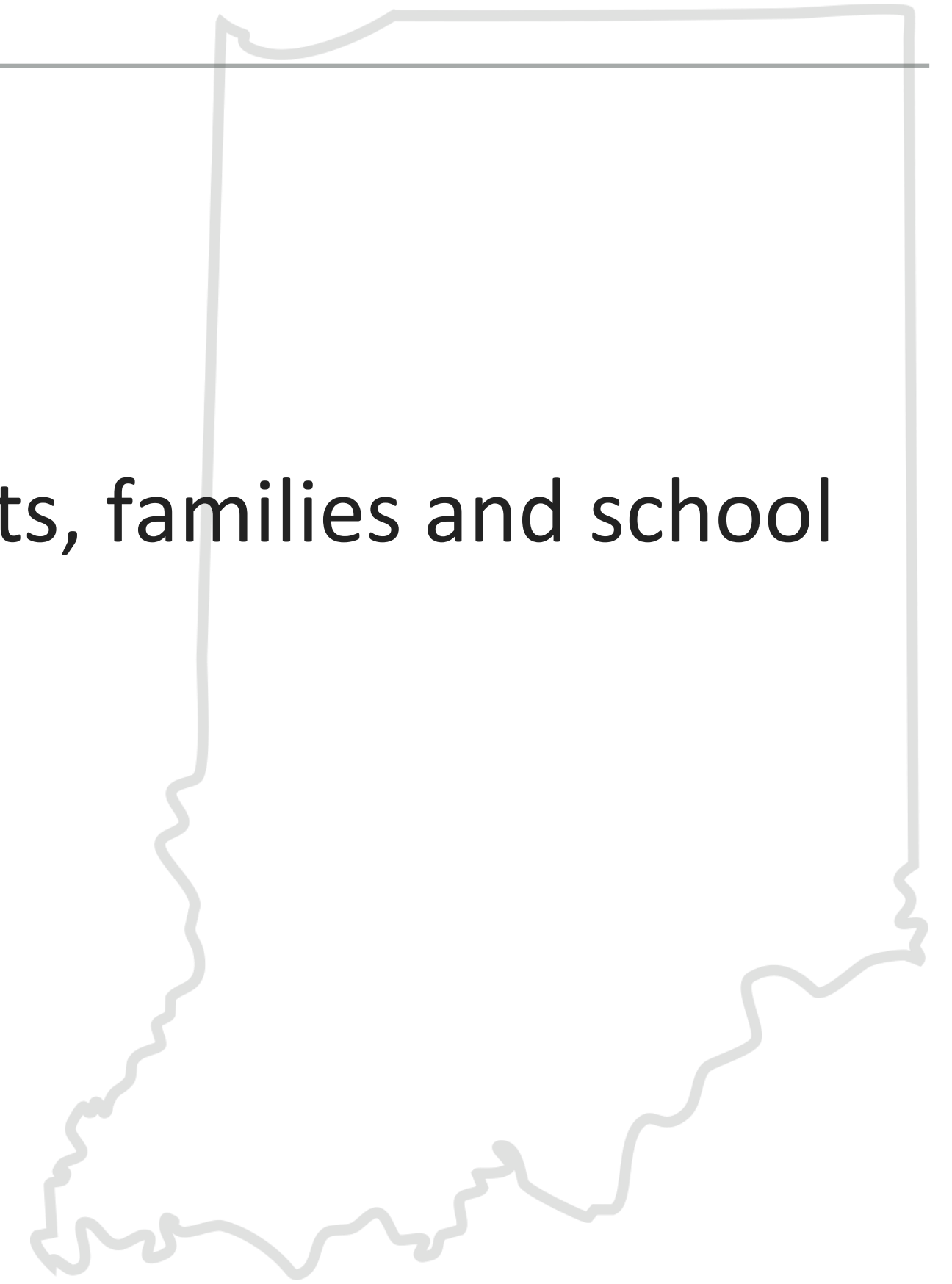
- ▶ Established in 1990 to increase Hoosier students' aspirations for and access to higher education
- ▶ Income-eligible students enroll in 7th or 8th grade
- ▶ Students who fulfill the Scholar Pledge earn up to four years of paid tuition at an Indiana college
- ▶ More than 100,000 Hoosier students are currently enrolled (between 7th grade and college seniors)
- ▶ Over 45,000 Hoosiers have earned a degree through the scholarship program

TIMELINE



# SCHOLAR SUPPORTS

- ▶ Eight Outreach Coordinators work around Indiana to help students, families and school counselors ensure students:
  - ▶ Enroll in 21st Century Scholars
  - ▶ Complete the required activities to maintain the scholarship
  - ▶ File the FAFSA annually
  - ▶ Have the support needed to succeed
- ▶ Other outlets: social media, press releases, email communications, Learn More Indiana materials, Scholar Guides, events and marketing campaigns around enrollment



# SCHOLAR SUPPORTS

- ▶ **Indiana ScholarCorps program**

- ▶ 25 ScholarCorps members around the state at public and private colleges
- ▶ Ensure students have supports on campus
- ▶ Created in 2011; celebrating 10 years in Indiana

- ▶ **GEAR UP** (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)

- ▶ \$6.1 million, seven-year federal grant in partnership with Purdue University
- ▶ 22 middle and high schools across nine Indiana school corporations, serving about 7,000 students

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# HIGH SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS



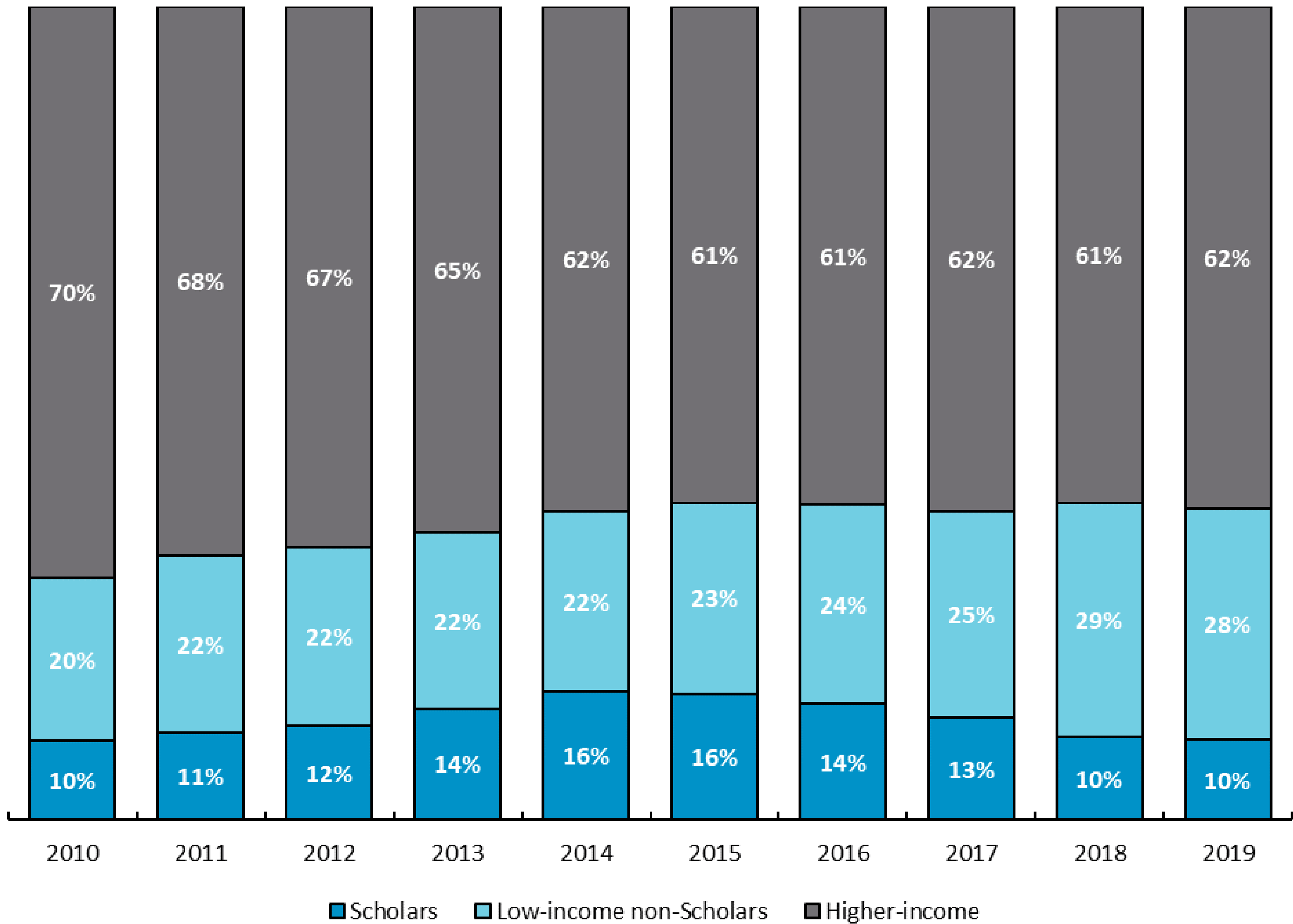


# SCHOLAR DEMOGRAPHICS

- ▶ Since 1990, more than 45,000 Hoosiers have earned a college degree with the 21st Century Scholarship.
- ▶ About 4 in 10 high school graduates are financially eligible for the Scholars program, but only 1 in 10 high school graduates is a Scholar.
- ▶ Women make up a larger share of 21st Century Scholars than men.

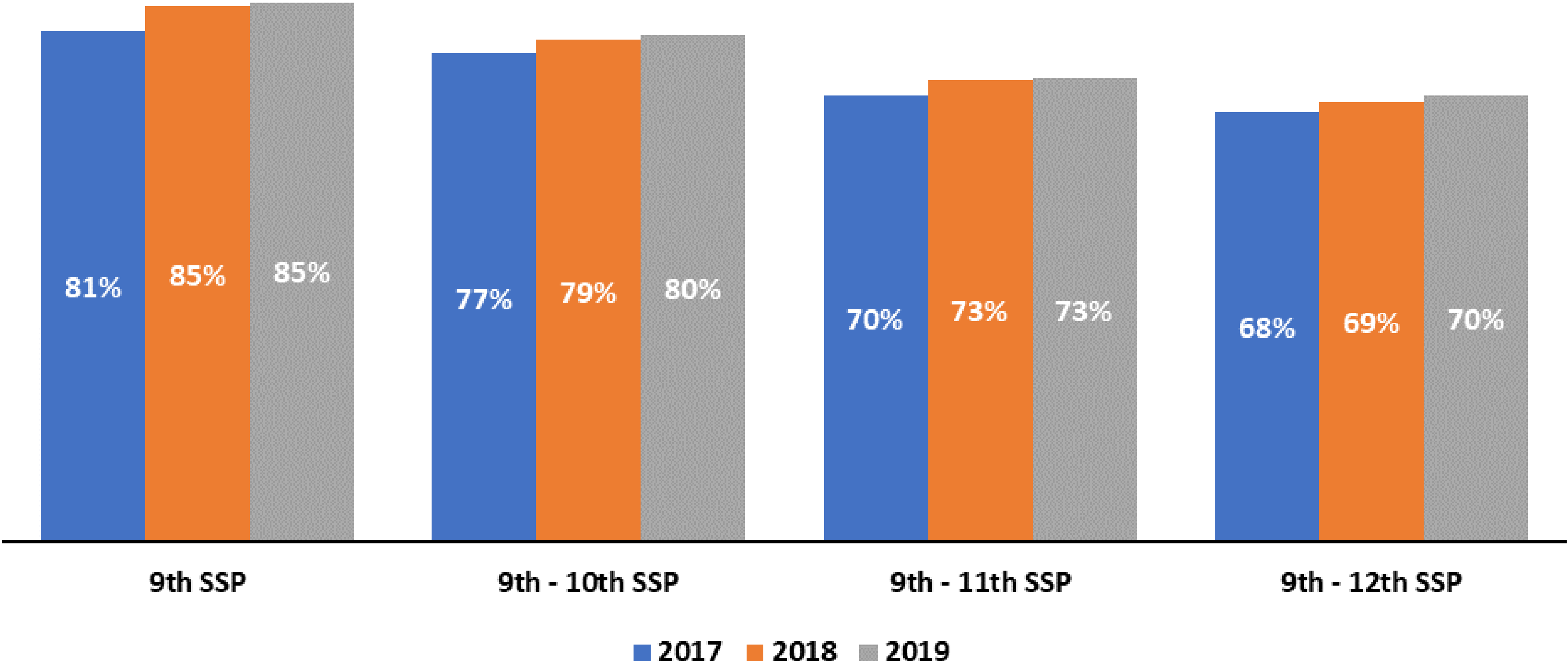


Nearly 2 out of 5 Indiana high school graduates are low-income





70% of High School Scholars Complete the Required Scholars  
Success Program

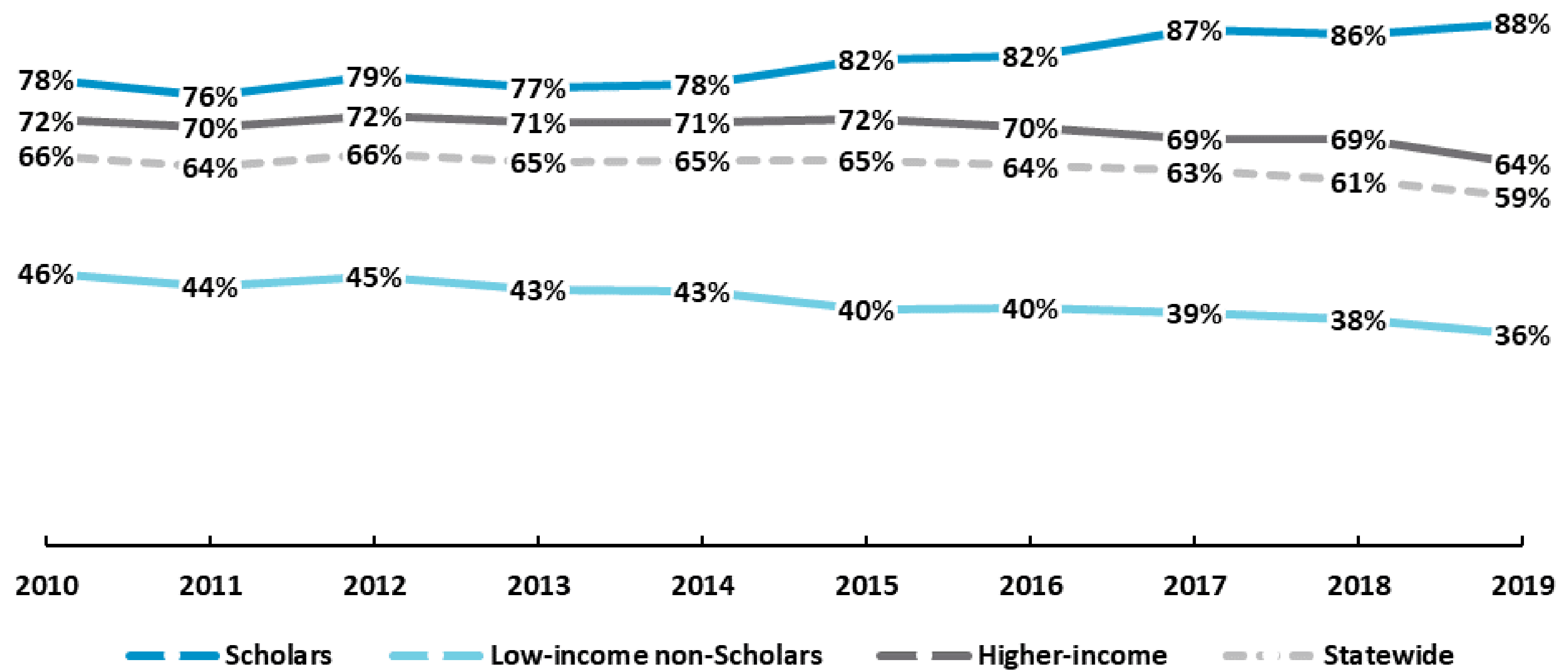


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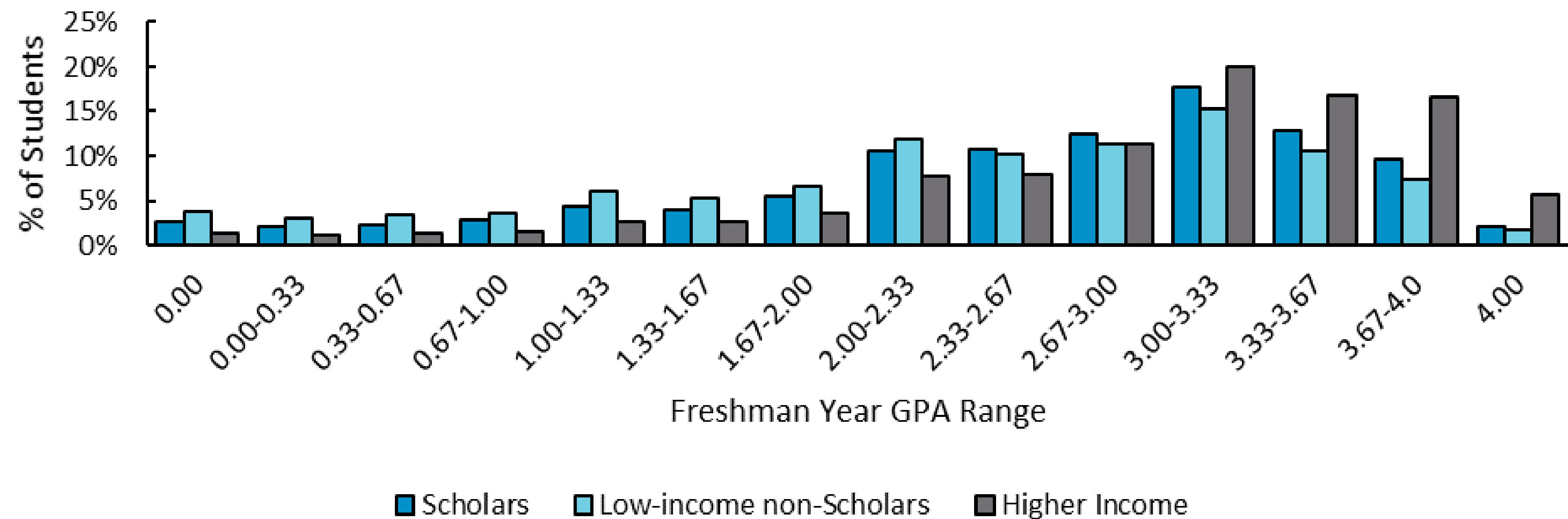
# COLLEGE ACCESS, SUCCESS AND COMPLETION



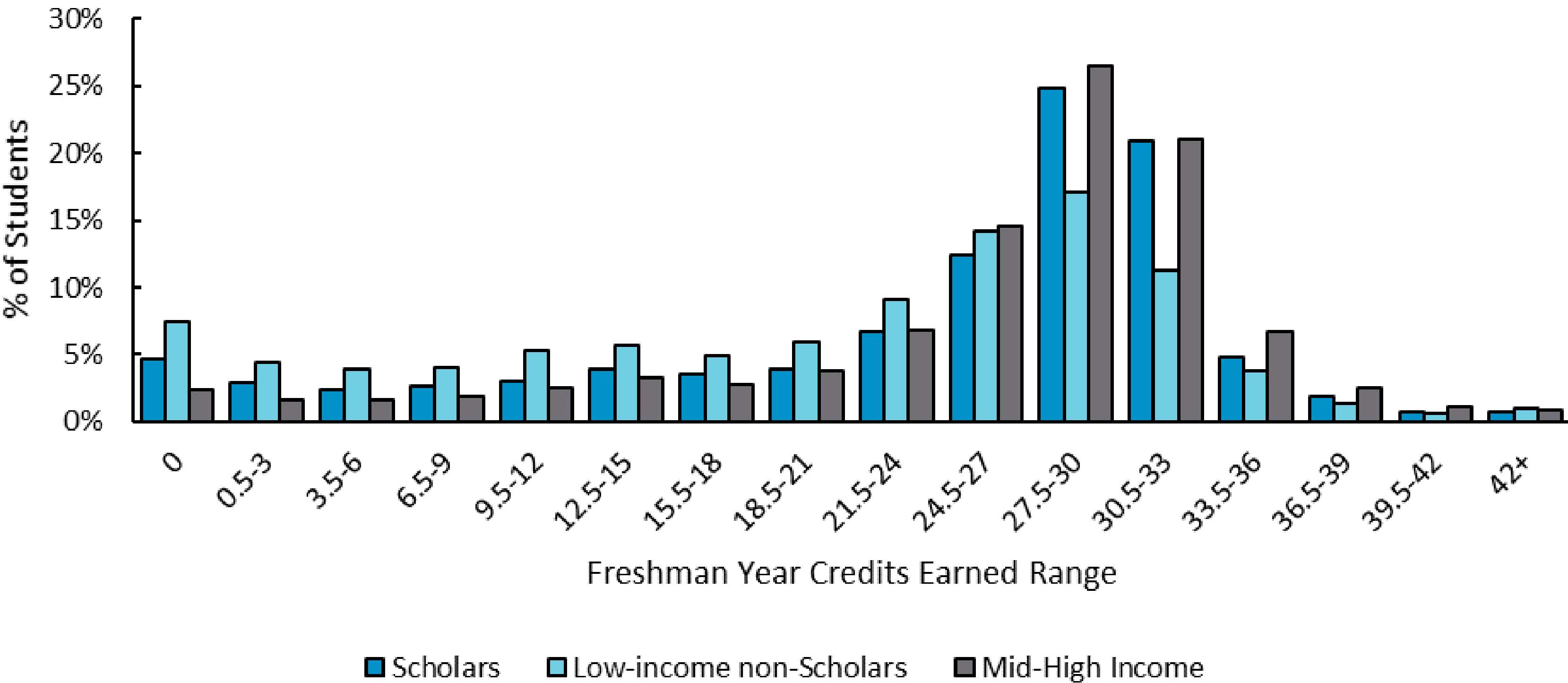
Scholars are more likely to go to college than non-Scholars



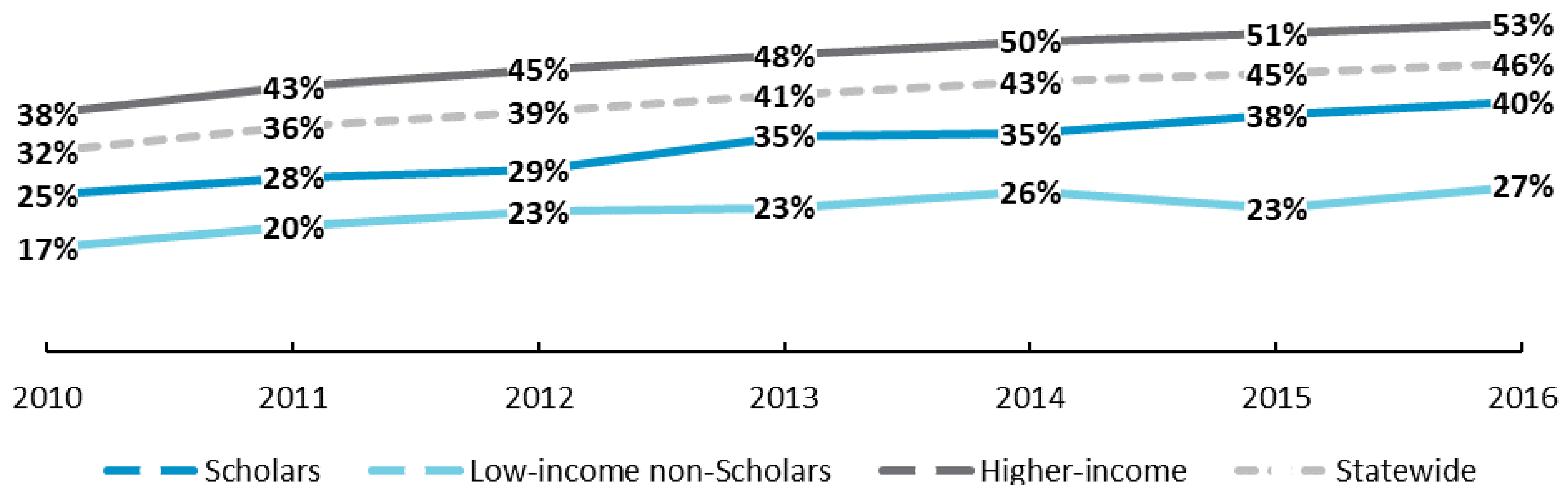
Scholars program helps to close the gap between income levels  
in freshman year GPA  
(2017 - 2019 HS Cohorts)



Almost three in four students earn 30 credit hours during freshman year, across all income levels  
(2017-2019 HS Cohorts)

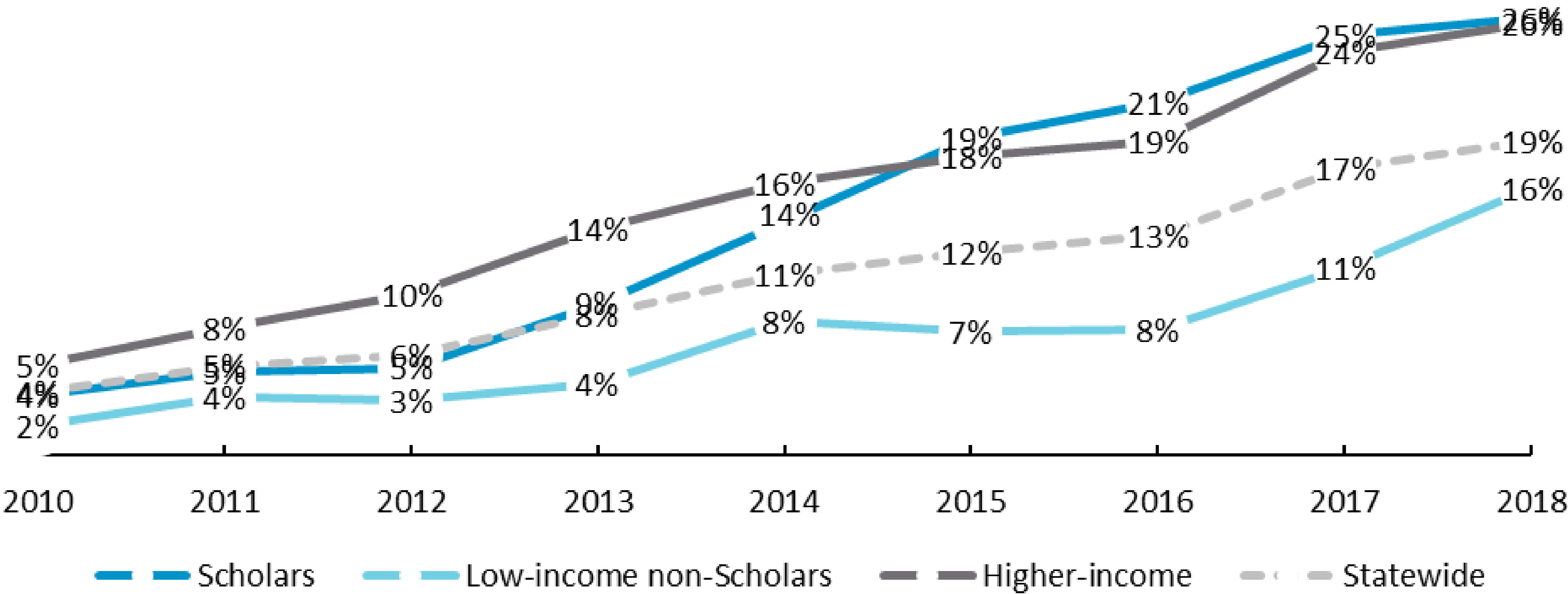


21st Century Scholars improve in on-time completion at four-year colleges





21st Century Scholars close two-year on-time completion gap



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

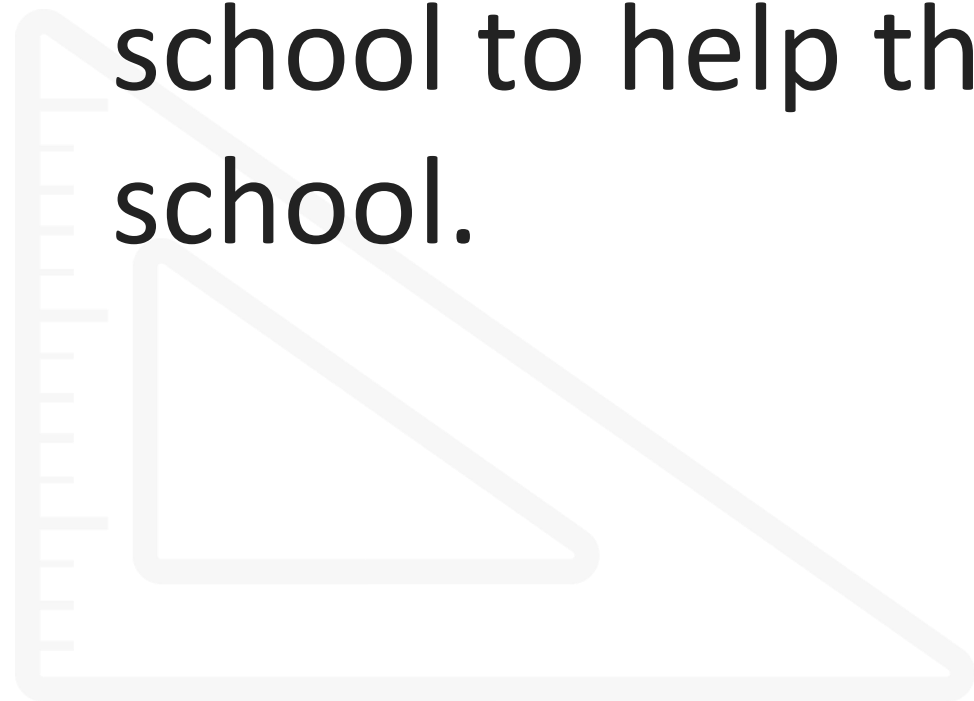


# RECOMMENDATIONS: PREPARATION

- ▶ Filing the FAFSA is the only way to secure state and federal financial aid (and many merit-based aid programs). Indiana's FAFSA filing rate has declined in recent years. While Scholars are required to fill out the FAFSA, the Commission calls for all high school seniors to be required to file the FAFSA (with opt-out provisions available), so Hoosier students aren't leaving money on the table.
- ▶ Students who take early college credit and/or earn the Academic Honors Diploma while in high school are better prepared for the rigors of higher education and more likely to graduate on time or even early. The Commission encourages those who counsel 21st Century Scholars to ensure these students are taking advantage of the opportunities available to them while in high school.

# RECOMMENDATIONS: AFFORDABILITY

- ▶ While one in 10 high school students is a Scholar, nearly four in 10 are financially eligible. The Commission calls for schools, counselors, businesses, community partners and others to ensure all eligible high school students enrolls in the 21st Century Scholars program.
- ▶ Students and their families need accurate and clear information to help them make smart financial decisions, such as borrowing money for college. The Commission advocates for all students to gain financial literacy skills throughout middle and high school to help them make informed choices about education and training beyond high school.



# RECOMMENDATIONS: OUTCOMES

- ▶ The Commission commits to continued collection and analysis of data about the 21st Century Scholars program for high school and college students, with the goal of using data-driven information to make policy or programmatic changes to the Scholars program.
- ▶ As demonstrated in this report, policy changes to the 21st Century Scholars program have made an impact on student outcomes. Two of those policy changes—requiring at least a Core 40 high school diploma and requiring completion of the Scholar Success Program—would be useful for all high school students to adhere to in preparation for life beyond high school. The Commission encourages all high schools to implement the Scholar Success Program and calls for the elimination of the general diploma.

# RECOMMENDATIONS: PARTNERSHIPS

- ▶ There is no one-size-fits-all approach to helping students find the right pathway for their individual lives. The Commission recommends direct and specific outreach to low-income Hoosier students across all demographics which includes helping students choose the right college and degree program for their individual lives.
- ▶ In partnering with the Indiana Department of Education, the Commission will help streamline and smooth transitions between K-12 and postsecondary education by providing additional and evolving opportunities to accelerate student learning. The statewide summer bridge program that launched in 2021, for example, must be sustained and expanded to ensure all students are prepared for education beyond high school.





INDIANA COMMISSION *for*  
HIGHER EDUCATION